IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 6-19 claims 29-38 without prejudice.

1.   (Original)   A method of exchanging information via an annotation, comprising:

providing an interface allowing a user to view query results, select a data object from the query results, and create an annotation with a scope encompassing a selected data object; and

providing an interface element allowing the user to expand the scope of the annotation.

2.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein providing an interface element allowing the user to expand the scope of the annotation comprises providing an interface element allowing the user to associate the annotation with a primary key for a row of data containing the selected data object.

3.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein providing an interface allowing a user to view query results and create an annotation with a scope related to the selected data object comprises:

providing an interface allowing the user to select one or more rows, columns, or cells of the query results; and

providing an interface allowing the user to create an annotation for the selected one or more rows, columns, or cells.

4.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein:

providing an interface element allowing the user to expand the scope of the annotation comprises allowing the user to associate the annotation with a model entity encompassing the selected data object; and

the method further comprises storing the annotation with a reference to the model entity.

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5.   (Original)   The method of claim 4, wherein:

allowing the user to associate the annotation with a model entity comprises presenting the user with one or more model entities encompassing the selected data object; and

the method further comprises storing the annotation with a reference to at least one of the one or more model entities selected by the user.

6.   (Canceled)   A method of exchanging information, comprising:

displaying first query results to a first user;

receiving, from the first user, a data object selected from the first query results;

providing an interface allowing the first user to create an annotation describing the selected data object and associate the annotation with an entity encompassing the selected data object; and

storing the annotation with a reference to the entity.

7.   (Canceled)   The method of claim 6, wherein the selected data object is an instance value of a field specified in an entity definition associated with the entity.

8.   (Canceled)   The method of claim 7, wherein the entity definition specified a plurality of logical fields corresponding to physical fields in a data repository.

9.   (Canceled)   The method of claim 6, wherein the entity is defined by a primary key field.

10.   (Canceled)   The method of claim 6, wherein the interface further allows the first user to specify whether a reference to the selected data object should be stored with the annotation.

11.   (Canceled)   The method of claim 6, further comprising:

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displaying second query results to a second user, wherein the entity encompasses at least a portion of the second query results; and

displaying, to the second user, an indication of the annotation.

12.   (Canceled)   The method of claim 11, wherein the second query results do not contain the selected data object described by the annotation.

13.   (Canceled)   The method of claim 11, further comprising, in response to input from the second user:

displaying the annotation to the second user; and

displaying, to the second user, the selected data object described by the annotation.

14.   (Canceled)   A method of accessing data, comprising:

displaying query results in response to issuing a query;

retrieving at least one annotation associated with an entity encompassing at least a portion of the query results; and

providing an indication of the annotation associated with the entity.

15.   (Canceled)   The method of claim 14, wherein the annotation describes a data object that is not contained in the displayed query results.

16.   (Canceled)   The method of claim 14, wherein the query contains an explicit reference to the entity.

17.   (Canceled)   The method of claim 14, wherein retrieving at least one annotation associated with the entity comprises:

looking up a primary key associated with one or more data objects contained in the query results; and

searching for annotations referring to the primary key.

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18. (Canceled) The method of claim 14, wherein:

providing an indication of the annotation associated with the entity comprises displaying an annotation icon; and

the method further comprises displaying the annotation, in response to input from the user.

19. (Canceled) The method of claim 18, wherein displaying the annotation further comprises providing an indication of data described by the annotation.

20. (Original) A computer-readable medium containing a program for exchanging information via annotations which, when executed by a processor, performs operations comprising:

providing an interface allowing a user to view query results, select a data object from the query results, and create an annotation with a scope encompassing a selected data object; and

providing an interface element allowing the user to expand the scope of the annotation.

21. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 20, wherein providing an interface element allowing the user to expand the scope of the annotation comprises providing an interface element allowing the user to associate the annotation with a primary key for a row of data containing the selected data object.

22. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 21, wherein:

providing an interface element allowing the user to expand the scope of the annotation comprises allowing the user to associate the annotation with an entity encompassing the selected data object; and

the method further comprises storing the annotation with a reference to the entity.

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23. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 22, wherein:

allowing the user to associate the annotation with an entity comprises presenting the user with one or more entities encompassing the selected data object; and

the method further comprises storing the annotation with a reference to at least one of the one or more entities selected by the user.

24. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the selected data object is an instance value of a field encompassed by an entity.

25. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 24, wherein the operations further comprise:

displaying second query results to a second user, wherein at least a portion of the second query results are associated with the entity; and

displaying, to the second user, an indication of the annotation.

26. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 25, wherein the second query results do not contain the selected data object described by the annotation.

27. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 25, wherein the operations further comprise, in response to input from the second user, displaying the annotation to the second user.

28. (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 27, wherein the operations further comprise displaying, to the second user, the selected data object described by the annotation.

29. (Canceled) A system for sharing information via annotations, comprising:

a set of one or more model entity definitions, each specifying one or more fields encompassed by a corresponding model entity;

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a query building interface allowing a first user to build a first query and view first query results received in response to issuing the query; and

an annotation system allowing the first user to create an annotation for a data object selected from the query results and associate the annotation with a first model entity encompassing a field related to the selected data object.

30.　(Canceled)　The system of claim 29, wherein the selected data object is an instance value of the field related to the selected data object.

31.　(Canceled)　The system of claim 29, wherein the query building interface allows the first user to select the first model entity, wherein a focus of the query is set by including one or more of the fields encompassed by the first model entity in a results list of the query.

32.　(Canceled)　The system of claim 29, wherein the annotation system is configured to associate the annotation with the first model entity by storing the annotation with a reference to the first model entity.

33.　(Canceled)　The system of claim 32, wherein the reference to the first model entity is a primary key associated with the selected data object.

34.　(Canceled)　The system of claim 29, wherein the annotation system is accessible to the first user via the query building interface.

35.　(Canceled)　The system of claim 29, wherein the query building interface is configured to allow a second user to view second query results, wherein at least a portion of the second query results are associated with the first model entity; and

displaying, to the second user, an indication of the annotation created for the selected data object.

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36. (Canceled) The system of claim 35, wherein the annotation system is configured to provide an indication of the annotation created for the selected data object regardless of whether the second query results contain the selected data object.

37. (Canceled) The system of claim 35, wherein the annotation system is further configured to, in response to input from the second user, display the annotation to the second user.

38. (Canceled) The system of claim 35, wherein the annotation system is further configured to display, to the second user, the selected data object.

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